

REMARKS

Please enter the above amendment prior to further examination.

The applicant hereby claims foreign priority benefits under 35 USC §119, of the following foreign applications:

Europe App. No. EP96203397 filed 12/6/96

Europe App. No. EP96203718 filed 12/24/96

Europe App. No. EP97912403 filed 12/1/97

A certified copy of EP96203397 was acknowledged as received in the parent application 09/307,978 now patent 6,157,325 issued Dec 5, 2000.

In response to the rejection of claims 1-11, 14, 15, and 21-59 under 35 USC 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by US patent 5,793,737 to Den Boef, applicant traverses the rejection because applicant has claimed priority of US patent 5,793,737 and therefore US patent 5,793,737 can not be a valid reference against the present application.

The priority of US patent 5,793,737 was also claimed in the parent application (Ser. No. 08/982,564).

In addition, applicants claim priority of European patent application EP96203397, filed 12/06/96, and a certified copy of the priority document for EP96203397 was mailed to the Patent Office on 9/4/03, the receipt of which was acknowledged. The filing date of European patent application EP96203397 is the same as the US filing date of patent 5,793,737 to Den Boef of 12/06/96. Thus, US patent 5,793,737 to Den Boef can not be a valid reference against the present patent application.

The claims are definite and distinguished from the citations and Applicant respectfully requests the allowance of all claims.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to credit any overpayment or charge any fee (except the issue fee) including fees for any required extension of time, to Account No. 14-1270.

Respectfully submitted,

By Michael E. Belk  
Michael E. Belk, Reg. 33,357  
Senior Patent Counsel  
(914) 333-9643

**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING**

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited this date with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail in an envelope addressed to:

COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

On December 22, 2004

By Noemi Chope